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1. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

On 15 June 1990, in a letter addressed to the Secretary-General (A/44/955-S/21362) the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People stated the following:

> "In my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I wish to express outrage at the incursion by the Israeli army into the Rimal Health Centre in Gaza City and its use of tear-gas, which seriously affected a large number of infants and women.
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> "According to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugeess in the Near East (press release HQ/8/90, dated 13 June 1990), on 12 June, an Israeli army officer, who was pursuing stone-throwers, fired two tear-gas canisters into the Rimal Health Centre. As a result, some 160 infants were overcome by tear-gas fumes and had to be given emergency treatment. Reuters reported, on 13 June, that the Israeli army had sentenced the officer in question to 10 days in prison.
>
> "On behalf of the the Committee, I wish to protest in the strongest terms the tendency on the part of the Israeli army to turn on children of ever younger ages in its efforts to suppress the intifadah through random brutality and intimidation of the civilian population. Only a week ago, on 5 June, Agence France Presse reported that two children, aged 7 and 14 respectively, were shot and killed in Nablus. Since the beginning of the intifadah, at least 209 children under 16 have been killed and hundreds of others wounded.
>
> "These policies and practices demonstrate yet again that Israel attaches little importance to the obligations incumbent upon it, as occupying Power, under the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, 1/ particularly to articles 24, 28 and 50, which provide for the legal protection of children. They are also in violation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child 2/ of 20 November 1989, which states that children shall enjoy special protection and care.
>
> "Deeply alarmed at the extreme gravity of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, which is exacerbated by the intransigence of the Israeli Government, the Committee on the Exercise of the

Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People calls once again for the urgent adoption of effective measures by the Security Council to provide international protection to Palestinian civilians, as requested by the General Assembly in resolutions 43/233 and 44/2 of 20 April and 6 October 1989 respectively. The Committee also appeals to you, and to the organizations of the United Nations system, to do everything possible to alleviate the suffering of the defenceless Palestinian civilians living under occupation, especially the women and children.

"The Committee wishes to stress once again that it is absolutely imperative to advance towards a comprehensive and just settlement of the question of Palestine in accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/42 of 6 December 1989, and again appeals to all parties concerned to intensify their efforts to attain this essential objective."

II. SECRETARY-GENERAL TO SEND PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE TO ISRAEL AND OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

The following statement (SG/SM/4454), attributable to the spokesman for the Secretary-General, was made on 13 June 1990:

"Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar yesterday invited the Israeli Ambassador, Johanan Bein, to inform the latter of his intention to send a mission to the area. In the meeting, Mr. Bein expressed the preparedness of his Government to receive a mission.

"Accordingly, the Secretary-General has decided to send Jean-Claude Aimé, who is responsible for matters relating to the Middle East, as his Personal Representative, on a visit to Israel and the occupied territories.

"The Secretary-General has been deeply concerned for some time about the developments in the territories. He felt that in view of his responsibilities under the Charter it was his duty to send a mission to look into the situation and to report back to him."

On 4 July, the following press statement (SG/SM/4466) was issued by the Secretary-General:

"I have received an initial report from my Personal Representative, Mr. Jean-Claude Aimé, on his

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mission to Israel and the occupied territories, where he stayed from 22 June through 1 July. During this period, he met with Prime Minister Shamir, Foreign Minister Levy and twice with Defence Minister Arens. He also met Justice Minister Meridor, Major-General Vilnai, responsible for the Southern Command, and Mr. Goren, co-ordinator for activities in the discussions with Palestinians. Throughout his visit, Mr. Aimé had wide-ranging discussions with Palestinians, at Jerusalem, Gaza, Nablus, Bethlehem, Jericho and Ramallah. The principal concern conveyed by the Palestinians was their profound feeling of vulnerability resulting from lack of protection. This fear was expressed by those living in refugee camps as well as residents of towns and villages. The Palestinians were also deeply concerned about the need to ensure their basic human and economic rights. Their grievances were conveyed to the Israeli authorities, who were urged to take the necessary steps to address them. For my part, I intend to pursue these matters in the coming days. At the same time, I would like to underline in the strongest possible way that there is no substitute for a negotiating process that will take fully into account the views of all the parties concerned."

III. STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL CONCERNING USE OF TEAR-GAS IN GAZA

On 19 June 1990, following consultations, the President of the Security Council issued the following statement (S/21363) on behalf of the members of the Council:

"The members of the Security Council strongly deplore the incident, which occurred on 12 June 1990 in a clinic belonging to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and located near to Shati camp in Gaza, in which several innocent Palestinian women and children were wounded by a tear-gas grenade thrown by an Israeli officer.

"The members of the Security Council are dismayed to find that the penalty imposed on that officer has been commuted.

"They reaffirm that the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, is applicable to the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967,

including Jerusalem, and request the High Contracting Parties to ensure respect for the Convention.

"They call upon Israel to abide by its obligations under that Convention."

IV. UNRWA DEPLORES TEAR-GAS INCIDENT AT ITS HEALTH CENTRE IN GAZA TOWN

The following press release was issued by UNRWA on 13 June 1990:

"The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) deplored an Israeli Defence Force (IDF) incursion into Rimal Health Centre in Gaza town and the use of tear-gas which affected a large number of Palestinian refugee women and their infants.

"The incident occurred yesterday, 12 June, when an IDF officer pursuing stone throwers fired two tear-gas canisters into the health centre crowded with mothers and infants. Approximately 160 infants were overcome by tear-gas fumes and had to be instantly treated.

"UNRWA is strongly protesting this latest incident which involved an inappropriate use of force against Palestinian civilian population in the occupied Gaza Strip." (See PAL/1732)

V. UNRWA COMMISSIONER-GENERAL APPEALS FOR SPECIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO MEET EMERGENCY NEEDS IN WEST BANK, GAZA STRIP AND LEBANON

The following press release was issued by UNRWA on 7 June 1990:

"The Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Giorgio Giacomelli, has launched an appeal to the international community for $5 million to enable the Agency to continue its emergency operations in Lebanon and the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip during the remainder of 1990. He also called for special contributions to finance the construction of a much-needed 200-bed hospital in the Gaza Strip.

"Mr. Giacomelli made his appeal at the annual informal meeting at Vienna on 6 and 7 June of representatives of 25 Governments and the European Community - UNRWA's major regular contributors and the Arab countries hosting Palestine refugees.

"The Commissioner-General emphasized the need for assurances that contributions would be forthcoming to continue the Agency's emergency operations which are becoming an ongoing requirement in Lebanon, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Another $35 million will be needed to continue these operations in 1991. Mr. Giacomelli said the Agency was also planning to build a hospital in the Gaza Strip to alleviate an acute shortage of hospital beds available for the Strip's 650,000 population, 450,000 of whom are refugees.

"The donor Governments expressed support for the indispensable humanitarian assistance rendered by UNRWA to Palestine refugees in the face of increasing difficulties and deteriorating economic circumstances in the area where the Agency operates. Participants stressed the need for continued financial support for UNRWA operations and urged other potential donors to join in this humanitarian effort.

"The meeting also praised UNRWA's Refugee Affairs Officer programme under which international staff are working in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to extend general assistance to the refugees and to safeguard Agency activities and premises. Many participants expressed their Governments' concern at the continued violations of UNRWA's privileges and immunities by the Israeli authorities, including the detention and interrogation of Agency staff and the numerous incursions into UNRWA premises by the Israeli security forces.

"Several participants pointed out that UNRWA is a valuable source of information on casualty figures and other humanitarian issues in the occupied territory. They requested that the Agency continue to provide this type of information." (See PA4/1731)

VI. EUROPEAN COUNCIL ADOPTS DECLARATION ON THE MIDDLE EAST AT DUBLIN ON 26 JUNE 1990

At the meeting of the European Council, held on 26 June 1990 at Dublin, the heads of State or Government of the 12 States

members of the European Community adopted the following declaration on the Middle East:

"The European Council recalls its long-standing position of principle on the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East. It is determined to encourage all efforts to promote dialogue between the parties directly concerned leading to the negotiation of a comprehensive settlement consistent with the principles it has set out, beginning with the Venice Declaration 10 years ago and further developed since, notably in the Madrid Declaration. This settlement should be found in the framework of an international peace conference under the auspices of the United Nations with the participation of the PLO. The European Council expresses its support for every effort by the permanent members of the Security Council to create a climate of confidence between the parties and, in this way, to facilitate the convening of the International Peace Conference.

"The European Council welcomes the commitment to continuing the peace process expressed in the letter to the President of the European Council from the Prime Minister of Israel. The European Council hopes that it will be followed in practice. It stresses the urgent need for Israel to begin a political dialogue with the Palestinian people which could lead to a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Such a settlement should be on the basis of resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) of the Security Council based on the principle of "land for peace".

"The European Council stresses that all parties have a responsibility to refrain from actions or statements which might impede steps towards dialogue and negotiation. Those who would choose violent over peaceful means for achieving political objectives cannot be allowed to prevail. Neither the taking of human life, whatever the circumstances, nor violence against civilians can play any part in achieving peace and reconciliation.

"Threats of war and of the use of weapons of mass destruction serve only to increase tension in the region and should be eschewed. The Community and its member States have consistently condemned both threats and acts of violence in the region, whatever their origin. In such a delicate situation, all channels of dialogue and negotiation should be kept open.

"The European Council is concerned that, by making territorial compromise ever more difficult, Israel's settlement policy in the Occupied Territories presents a growing obstacle to peace in the region. Reiterating that Jewish settlements in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including East Jerusalem, are illegal under international law, it calls earnestly on the Government of Israel not to permit settlements there. The European Council recognizes and supports the right of Soviet Jews to emigrate to Israel and elsewhere. It is, however, firmly of the view that this right must not be implemented at the expense of the rights of the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories.

"Recent events underline once again that the status quo in the Occupied Territories is untenable. The lamentable position concerning the observance of human rights in the Occupied Territories has led the Community and its member States to set out repeatedly their concern. They are resolved to step up their already significant support for the protection of the human rights of the population of the Occupied Territories.

"In the present situation, and particularly with regard to the protection of the population, the United Nations, too, can and should play a useful role. The European Council supports such a role of the United Nations.

"The European Council refers to the obligation on parties to the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War 1/ to respect and to ensure respect for its provisions. The Twelve have repeatedly called on Israel to adhere to its obligations towards the Palestinian population in the territory under its occupation, which is protected by that Convention. They have observed that it has notably failed to do so in a number of important areas. Concerned that the human rights of the population of the Occupied Territories continue to be inadequately protected, the European Council calls for further action, in accordance with the Convention, to ensure that protection.

"The European Council has reviewed the range of actions taken on the basis of the Strasbourg Declaration in order to arrest the deterioration of the economic and social situation in the Occupied Territories and to help to preserve the future of

Palestinian society. It notes with satisfaction the significant increase of Community aid, particularly in the 1990 programme of direct aid which is ready for adoption. It confirms its determination to double direct Community aid by 1992.

"The European Council also expresses its satisfaction with the growth in exports of agricultural produce from the Occupied Territories to the Community. It invites the Community institutions to take appropriate action for a rapid further improvement of the conditions of access to the Community market for Palestinian products and to examine further possibilities for increasing trade between the Community and the Occupied Territories.

"As an expression of the importance which the European Council attaches to facilitating the speedy and efficient implementation of the Community's expanding programme for the benefit of the population of the Occupied Territories, the Commission is invited to appoint a representative to the Occupied Territories for this purpose at an early date." (See A/45/336-S/21385, pp. 16-17)

VII. TWENTY-SEVENTH UNITED NATIONS SEMINAR ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE, HELD AT HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK ON 25 AND 26 JUNE 1990.

The Twenty-seventh United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine (Seventh North American Regional Seminar) entitled "Peace and justice for the Palestinian people - an imperative for the 1990s", which preceeded the Seventh United Nations North American Regional Symposium on the Question of Palestine, was held at United Nations Headquarters, New York, on 25 and 26 June 1990, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/41 B of 6 December 1989. H.E. Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, acted as Chairman of the Seminar and H.E. Mr. Alexander Borg Olivier, Rapporteur of the Committee, served as Rapporteur.

Four meetings were held and 12 panelists presented papers on selected aspects of the question of Palestine. Representatives of 47 Governments, Palestine, one non-member State, two United Nations organs, seven United Nations specialized agencies and bodies, three intergovernmental organizations, one national liberation movement and 15 non-governmental organizations attended the Seminar.

The joint event was opened by Mrs. Diallo and was addressed by the representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Under-Secretary-General Ronald I. Spiers. A message from H.E. Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, was read out by the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations.

At the opening meeting, further statements were made by the following: H.E. Mr. Ricardo Alarcón de Quesada, Vice-Chairman of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples; H.E. Mr. Guennadi Oudovenko, Vice-Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid; H.E. Mr. Clovis Maksoud, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States; H.E. Mr. Ahmed Engin Ansay, Permanent Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference; and Mr. Count Pietersen, Chief Representative of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania.

Concluding statements were made by the Permanent Observer of Palestine and by the Chairman.

For their own part, the Seminar and Symposium adopted a joint message to Mr. Arafat.

The two panels that were established and their panelists were as follows:

1. "The role of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the economic, cultural and social development of the Palestinian people, and its political programme to achieve statehood for the Palestinian people."

Mr. Ibrahim Abu-Lughod (Palestinian)

2. "The intifadah, the urgency of convening the International Peace Conference for a "two peoples two States" solution, and the role of North America."

Mr. Mahdi Abdul-Hadi (Palestinian); Mr. Faisal Husseini (Palestinian); H.E. Mr. Latyr Kamara (Senegal); Mr. Amos Kenan (Israel); Mr. Hans Peter Kotthaus (Federal Republic of Germany); Mr. Michael Lanigan (Ireland); Mrs. Margaret McCormack (United States of America); Rabbi Marshall Meyer (United States of America); The Most Reverend Michael J. Peers (Canada); Mr. Chaim Shur (Israel); Mr. Andrej Zakharov (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics).

The expert members of the panels agreed on summaries of the presentations and the discussion on the two topics. The full text of the proceedings will be published in due course as a

publication of the United Nations Division for Palestinian Rights.

Conclusions and recommendations

1. The participants expressed appreciation once again for the opportunity to have a full and candid discussion of aspects of the question of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. They expressed satisfaction that the Seminar had made a positive contribution to the peace process by providing a forum for a balanced and constructive discussion of the issues.

2. The participants reaffirmed the view that negotiations based on the "two peoples, two States" principle, which adequately addressed the rights and concerns of both the Israelis and Palestinians, would result in peace and justice in the region, as envisaged in General Assembly resolutions 181 (II) and 194 (III). Statements were made indicating that important sectors of the Israeli public have become active in support of the "two States" solution. Appreciation was expressed for the position adopted by a large number of Governments and NGOs in response to the proclamation of the State of Palestine, the Palestinian Arab State, to exist side by side with the State of Israel. The participants urged that negotiations should be based on the "land for peace" formula embodied in Security Council resolution 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which provide a foundation for an eventual settlement, and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, including primarily the right to self-determination.

3. They noted the adoption of General Assembly resolution 44/42 of 6 December 1989 and were encouraged by the overwhelming vote in favour of this balanced and comprehensive resolution which, for the first time, was supported by all members of the European Community. This resolution reaffirmed the necessity of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the PLO and the five permanent members of the Security Council. Regret was expressed that to date there has been no progress in that regard. The PLO has explicitly accepted these resolutions whereas some recent statements on the part of the newly-formed Government of Israel seemed to cast doubt on its adherence to Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

4. Participants expressed deep concern at the continued loss of life in the occupied territories and at the continued

violations by Israel of the human rights of the civilian population in the occupied Palestinian territory. The international community has repeatedly declared that the Israeli policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian territory were in violation of its obligations as a party to the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War 1/ and contrary to United Nations resolutions and generally recognized norms of international law. The participants appealed to the parties to the Convention to ensure respect for its provisions. They deplored recent statements by the Israeli Government implying the prospect of increased settlement of immigrants in the occupied Palestinian territory, while Israel continues to deny Palestinians the right to their homes. The participants supported the right of freedom of movement and the right of everyone to leave any country and the right to return to one's own country. However, these rights cannot be used as a pretext to settle immigrants or Israeli civilians in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem. They urged the Security Council to prevent such illegal settlements.

5. Participants viewed with grave concern the tragic incidents which have taken place recently in Israel and in the occupied Palestinian territory. They deplored the attack in Israel on the Palestinian workers from Gaza leading to several deaths and 10 wounded, which sparked demonstrations throughout the occupied territories that resulted in seven additional Palestinian deaths by Israeli army gunfire, and in the wounding of hundreds of others. Further, the participants expressed their concern over the recent incursion of the Israeli Defense Forces in the UNRWA Health Centre in Gaza town in which many civilians and, in particular, infants and young children, were injured. At the same time, participants expressed deep concern at the aborted raid on Tel Aviv beaches by Palestinian guerrillas and noted that the Palestine Liberation Organization dissociated itself from that attack.

6. The participants supported the intifadah and the Palestinian peace initiative of November 1988 as efforts by the Palestinian people in its struggle to attain and exercise its inalienable rights. The participants considered that the steps proposed by the Israeli Government on 14 May 1989 were inadequate, since they did not include interim measures of protection for the Palestinian people nor other measures which would enable the Palestinians to fully exercise their right to self-determination. It was noted that the intifadah had far-reaching implications which included effects on aspects of Israeli politics. Specifically, it led to a major government crisis and helped the forces working for a just peace to engage in dialogue and joint activities with the Palestinians as a way

to promote mutual understanding. They agreed that the United Nations should continue to offer its good offices and organize activities to bring together Palestinians and Israelis under its auspices. Participants appealed to all Governments with influence, including the United States, Western European countries, Israel and the Palestinians to pursue more vigorous efforts toward a fair and just solution to the Middle East dispute.

7. Participants appealed to the Security Council to assume and discharge its responsibilities and to take urgent measures to ensure the physical protection and to guarantee the safety and security of the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation, including prevention of deportation of Palestinians, which has been repeatedly condemned by the Security Council and the General Assembly. They urged the Security Council, particularly its permanent members, to undertake every effort to facilitate the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and to adopt interim measures, including the deployment of a United Nations force to safeguard the physical security of the people of the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem.

8. The participants noted with appreciation that the Secretary-General had taken the initiative to send a Personal Representative to Israel and the occupied territories to look into the situation and report back to him. The participants expressed appreciation for the Secretary-General's continuing endeavours to advance the peace process and to facilitate the convening of the International Peace Conference.

9. The participants called upon the Committee to ensure that United Nations regional seminars on the question of Palestine provided an opportunity for diverse points of views to be expressed so that a meaningful dialogue could be held among people of good will on all sides. Satisfaction was expressed with the constructive and frank exchange which took place at this seminar between the Israeli and Palestinian participants, as well as nationals of other countries including those of Jewish faith. It was noted, however, that while Palestinians representing the PLO had participated, the Government of Israel had yet to agree to be represented in such forums. The hope was expressed that the Government of Israel would be represented at future meetings. Participants suggested that future seminars and NGO symposia related to the question of Palestine should consider some of the substantive issues which need to be addressed.

10. Participants called on all countries and particularly the United States and other Western countries to support the Committee's activities and its objective of expanding dialogue

among opinion shapers and responsible political leaders. These Governments as well as other States Members of the United Nations members were urged to participate in the work of the Committee as members or observers. The participants expressed the view that the Committee could make a significant contribution through the convening of seminars and symposia to widen the exchange of views ultimately leading to areas of common approval. It was noted with concern that the United States Government has, for the present, suspended its dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organization. Participants considered that this action constituted a serious setback for the peace process. The participants expressed the hope that the dialogue would be re-established as soon as possible and its scope expanded to include the consideration in a constructive manner of substantive issues so as to enhance the process of negotiations leading to a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine. Adversaries must speak together if peace is to be achieved.

VIII. SEVENTH UNITED NATIONS NORTH AMERICAN REGIONAL NGO SYMPOSIUM ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE, HELD IN NEW YORK FROM 27 TO 29 JUNE 1990

The Seventh United Nations North American Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine on the theme "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people" was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 27 to 29 June 1990 in accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/41 B of 6 December 1989. The Symposium followed the Twenty-seventh United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, which took place from 25 to 26 June 1990.

The Symposium was attended by representatives of 110 NGOs from the United States and Canada. Still other NGOs from several regions were present as were a number of governmental and intergovenmental observers.

H.E. Mr. Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal) opened the meeting on behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. The opening session was addressed by the Permanent Observer of Palestine, who read out a message from H.E. Mr. Yasser Arafat and by Ms. Jeanne Butterfield, Chairman of the North American Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine, who served as Moderator of the Symposium.

Two panels were established. The first considered the topic "Breaking the impasse: moving towards Israeli-Palestinian peace and convening the International Peace Conference". Under that topic, papers were presented by: H.E. Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo;

Ms. Mahdi Abdul-Hadi (President, Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs, Jerusalem); Mrs. Maha Mustaklem Nassar (The Union of Palestinian Committees in the State of Palestine); Mr. Edward Said (Professor in the Department of English, Columbia University); Mr. Shmuel Amir, (a founder of the "Peace and Security Movement" in Israel); Mr. Jack O'Dell (International Affairs Director of the National Rainbow Coalition); and, Mr. Joel Beinin (Editor of the Middle East Report).

The second panel was entitled "Intifadah Update". Papers on this subject were presented by: Mrs. Chaya Amir (free-lance writer, editor and translator); Mr. Hillel Bardin, (Hebrew University of Jerusalem); and Mrs. Zahira Kamal (Arab Studies Centre, East Jerusalem).

Twelve workshops were set up under the general theme "Milestones and future tasks for organizing NGO constituencies" to consider the following topics:

(a) Introduction to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict;

(b) Settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, demographics and immigration;

(c) Human rights violations in the occupied territory;

(d) Middle East Witness Project;

(e) United States aid to Israel: strategies and campaigns;

(f) Christian community;

(g) Jewish community;

(h) Muslim community;

(i) Women;

(j) Labour movement;

(k) Education;

(l) Business community.

H.E. Mr. Ricardo Alarcón de Quesada (Cuba), Vice Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, presided over the closing session of the Symposium, at which time statements were made by the Moderator and also the Reverend Ibrahim Ayad, President, Palestine

Committee for NGOs. For their own part the Seminar and Symposium adopted a joint message to Mr. Arafat.

The Symposium adopted a declaration by consensus, which is reproduced below, and elected a new North American Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine.

The full text of the report together with action-oriented proposals of the 12 workshops will be issued in due course as a special bulletin of the United Nations Division for Palestinian Rights.

Declaration and plan of action adopted by the North American Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine

1. We, the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) participating in the Seventh United Nations North American Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine wish to thank the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for making this meeting possible. We are indeed honoured by the reception, and the presence of the members and observers of this distinguished United Nations body.

2. We wish also to thank the Chief of the Division for Palestinian Rights and are especially grateful for his enthusiastic support throughout our deliberations. We wish to thank also the liaison officers, the staff of the Division and the Department of Conference Services for their invaluable assistance in the preparation and execution of this meeting.

3. We honour the victims of Israel's brutal and senseless repression of the heroic Palestinian uprising, with specific homage to the children of the stones and the sufferings and agonies they have endured. We commit ourselves to provide moral, political and material support to all the Palestinian people in their struggle for self-determination and freedom.

4. We are heartened by the substantive contributions of the expert panelists, workshop organizers, resource persons and facilitators, as well as the insightful input of the record number of NGOs which participated and observed in this Symposium.

5. We resolutely reaffirm the overwhelming international majority decision that the PLO is the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. We affirm the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in conformity with all relevant United Nations resolutions, including the right to self-determination without external interference, the right to

establish an independent Palestinian State on its own national territory under the leadership of the PLO and the right of return. We absolutely reaffirm the position of an overwhelming international majority as expressed through General Assembly resolution 43/177 of 15 December 1988 acknowledging the proclamation of the State of Palestine by the Palestine National Council and the decision that the designation "Palestine" should be used in place of the designation "Palestine Liberation Organization" in the United Nations system, without prejudice to the observer status and functions of the Palestine Liberation Organization within the United Nations system, in conformity with relevant United Nations resolutions and practice.

6. We condemn the persistent attempts by the United States Government to prevent Palestine's full participation in United Nations agencies and affiliated bodies.

7. We welcome the Palestinian peace initiative as a practical means towards the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region. We call upon the Governments of the United States and Israel to respond positively to this initiative by supporting the immediate convening of the International Peace Conference in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 43/176 of 15 December 1988 and 44/42 of 6 December 1989, which demonstrated for the first time the support of all members of the European Community. The PLO has explicitly accepted these resolutions, whereas some recent statements on the part of the newly-formed Government of Israel cast doubt on its adherence to Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

8. We deplore the decision of the United States Government to suspend dialogue with the PLO. We consider such suspension to encourage Israel's occupation and confiscation of, and expanded settlement on, Palestinian land.

9. We undertake to intensify our efforts to complement international efforts to alleviate the suffering of those who have been the targets of Israeli violence, especially the children, many thousands of whom have been maimed, permanently disabled and emotionally traumatized. We call upon the United Nations system, agencies, organizations and programmes, especially the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the International Labour Organisation and the United Nations Development Programme, to intensify their efforts to address the educational, medical, housing, and general economic and social needs of the Palestinian people in co-operation with Palestinian communities, popular committees and grass-roots organizations. We call upon States Member of the

United Nations to increase their contributions and support for such efforts. We once again call for an expansion of the refugee affairs programme, and call for the Refugee Affairs Officer Programme to be encouraged to take a pro-active role, and not merely a passive observer role.

10. We welcome greater co-ordination among United Nations agencies on the Palestine question, and particularly encourage their co-ordination with NGOs whose work complements United Nations programmes. We are gratified by the first United Nations-sponsored meeting of the Latin American and Caribbean NGOs at Buenos Aires, this year, and by their formation of a co-ordinating committee on the question of Palestine. We look forward to interacting with NGOs in that region and support the successful convening of the next meeting in 1991.

11. We recognize and express our continued concern for the role that de facto and de jure racism plays in Israel's treatment of the Palestinian people, both those in the occupied territory and those citizens of Israel who - without the benefit of "Jewish nationality" - are denied most basic rights under Israeli law. Actions by the State of Israel directed against Palestinians, supported by United States aid in violation of United States law, demonstrate how racism forms an element of Israel's state ideology which denies the Palestinian people their inalienable rights. This is of continued concern as the demolition of Palestinian homes and villages, as well as the confiscation of Palestinian land and water, are accelerating, both within Israel and in the occupied territory under cover of the intifadah.

12. We deplore the United States veto of the Security Council proposal for a United Nations force to be dispatched to the occupied territory that would protect the Palestinian civilian population. We encourage the General Assembly to invoke the "Uniting for Peace" resolution, which would legally empower it to act in such a critical situation in accordance with the inherent right of collective and self-defence in customary international law. We further call upon all States parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention 1/ to fulfil their obligations under common article 1 of that Convention to "ensure respect" for the Convention by monitoring, recording of and intervening in Israeli human rights violations against Palestinians in the occupied territory.

13. We are convinced that Soviet Jewish immigration to Israel presents a further assault on all segments of the Palestinian community in every part of historic Palestine. More Palestinian lands are slated for confiscation, existing Jewish settlements are being expanded and the planning and building of new settlements continue unabated on Palestinian land with Israeli Government subsidies, in spite of official statements to

the contrary. This is true whether it is within the "green line", where the last phases of "Judaization" are in progress, or in the territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem. We, therefore, call for an immediate ban on all Israeli confiscation of, and settlement on Palestinian land. We further call for a ban on United States Government funding of Soviet Jewish immigration to Israel until Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem has ended. We further call upon the United States and Canadian Governments to open their doors to Soviet Jewish immigration.

14. We applaud this year's NGO concern with United States aid to Israel and we consider such focus as essential to breaking the present impasse created by the United States and Israeli intransigence and obstructionism to the peace initiative of the Palestine National Council at its nineteenth session. We believe that the continuation of United States aid to Israel under current circumstances is morally, politically, and legally wrong. We insist that the United States Government enforce its own laws regulating military and economic assistance, particularly considering Israel's violations of United States human rights provisions and arms export restrictions, and further insist that the United States apply to Israel the principles embodied in the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986. We call upon the Canadian Government to impose economic and other sanctions against Israel in view of the persistent, systematic and massive violence in contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 3/ and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. 2/

15. We denounce Israeli laws which prohibit contacts between Israeli citizens and the PLO. Such laws explicitly obstruct dialogue between Israeli and Palestinian individuals, given that virtually all Palestinians stand by the PLO.

16. We join the anti-apartheid community in its deep concern over the continued military collaboration between Israel and South Africa. We take note also of General Assembly resolution 44/113 of 15 December 1989, which calls for an investigation of Israeli-South African collaboration in the development of medium range nuclear missiles, and we look forward to the upcoming report of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.

17. We applaud Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress for their position that black South Africans and Palestinians both suffer under a "unique form of colonialism". We further commend Mr. Mandela for his principled refusal on numerous occasions during his visit to the United States to distance himself from and sever solidarity with the Palestinian struggle and the PLO. We take inspiration from the anti-

apartheid movement in North America in its successful sanctions campaign against South African apartheid. We endeavour to take similar action vis-à-vis Israel. We believe our efforts and those of the anti-apartheid movement are complementary, reciprocal and together advance the cause of world justice and peace.

18. The aim of this meeting is to develop practical organizing strategies and support projects for concerted action by North American NGOs. Our primary work was conducted in workshops and we receive their recommendations as appended below, and commend them to all NGOs for their careful consideration and implementation.

IX. NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS: ACTIVITIES AND INFORMATION

In the course of June the following information was received by the Division for Palestinian Rights:

1) "The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs". Monthly publication, available from: P.O. Box 53062, Washington, DC 20009.

2) "Najda Newsletter", newsletter of Najda, Women Concerned about the Middle East. Available from P.O. Box 7152, Berkeley, CA 94797.

3) "April 17th", quarterly, available from The Committee to Support Palestinian Political Prisoners, P.O. Box 29340, Chicago, IL 60602

4) "WAFA", weekly publication of Palestine News Agency, Inc. Available from suite 1071, 529 14th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20045.

5) "Solidarity" publication of the Committee for Solidarity with people of Asia and Africa, published by the Bulgarian Committee for Solidarity with the People of Africa and Asia, Third of April Street, Sofia 1040, Bulgaria.

6) "Israel and Palestine Political Report", available from Magelan, 5 rue Cardinal Mercier 75009 Paris, France.

7) "Amaneces", Boletín Informativo de Organizaciones No Gubernamentales Pro-Palestina. Available from: Apartado de Correos 2102, 37080 Salamanca, Spain.

8) "AJME News", bulletin of Americans for Justice in the Middle East. Available from P.O. Box 113-5581, Beirut, Lebanon.

9) "Il Fuoco della Pace", collection of interviews and observations in Italian based on 1987/88 visits to Palestine. Available from the author: Flora Nicoletta, Via Feronia 146, 00157 Rome, Italy.

10) "Committee to Open Borders report" concerning Jewish emigration from the USSR. Available from: Box 53145, Temple Heights Station, Washington, DC 20009, or c/o Magelan, 5 rue Cardinal Mercier, 75009 Paris, France.

Notes

1/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 75, No. 973.

2/ Resolution 44/25.

3/ Resolution 217 A (III).